



The President's Daily Brief

20 May 1969

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Enemy-initiated activity was generally light over the past 24 hours, but Communist forces in many parts of the country continue to prepare for attacks. Although there are no significant new indications bearing on the timing of the enemy's next offensive phase, the possibility of another flare-up like the one on 12-13 May remains high.

EUROPE

German tongues are loosening up as elections come closer and the difficulty of living together until that date begins to tell on the grand coalition.

Chargé Fessenden talked separately last week with Helmut Schmidt, SPD leader in the Bundestag, and his CDU counterpart, Rainer Barzel. Barzel commented inter alia that coalition relations had been strained both by the bitter debate on revaluation and over the attitude Bonn should take toward Cambodia's recognition of East Germany. From his talk with Schmidt, Fessenden gained the impression that indeed the coalition had been strained, primarily because the SPD does not feel the CDU substitute measures for revaluation will be effective. Schmidt felt, however, that the issue would not cause a crisis between the coalition partners.

On the subject of European integration, Schmidt expressed the opinion that the two parties are on the same "basic wave

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length" and De Gaulle's departure makes it less of an election campaign issue. Barzel agreed that integration should not play a part in the campaign, but he expressed the fear that Brandt might take an initiative designed to inject it into the election. Both men continue to favor UK entry into the Common Market but neither expects it to happen quickly or easily.

Despite these strains in the coalition, the member parties will probably hang together until the elections, even though the government will be able to accomplish little of significance.

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

TURKEY

The military is exerting strong pressure to prevent passage today of a constitutional amendment restoring full political rights to those ousted by the military coup nine years ago.

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The beneficiaries of the amendment would be the faction led by former President Bayar in Prime Minister Demirel's Justice Party. (Bayar and his associates, while now permitted to belong to a political party, are still proscribed from running for office.) Demirel had been dragging his feet on introducing the bill, advocated not unnaturally by the Bayar faction, until opposition leader Inonu forced his hand by coming out for it ten days ago.

The odds are that the military's muscle flexing will be enough to persuade the Senate either to shelve the bill or defeat it. The military would probably much prefer to remain in the background, serving as the final arbiter on crucial decisions, but allowing the Demirel civilian government to continue doing most of the country's official business.

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